

VZCZCXR00689
PP RUEHDBU
DE RUEHKV #2068/01 1500738
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 300738Z MAY 06
FM AMEMBASSY KIEV
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9560
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE
RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 KIEV 002068

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/26/2016

TAGS: PREL KDEM ETRD EAID AORC UNMIK PINR YI AZ GG

MD, UP

SUBJECT: UKRAINE/GUAM: U.S.-GUAM BILATERAL MEETING

REF: BAKU 734

Classified By: Political Counselor Aubrey A. Carlson for reasons 1.4(b,
d)

¶1. (U) Summary: The U.S. delegation of EUR DAS Kramer and Vice-Presidential Deputy National Security Adviser Wood met with GUAM (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Moldova) representatives May 22. GUAM representatives favorably noted strong U.S.-GUAM past and present cooperation. Kramer congratulated GUAM for its evolution into an international organization, expressed continuing U.S. support for GUAM, and urged GUAM to take steps necessary to ensure the effectiveness of the newly established GUAM secretariat. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Tarasyuk and Azerbaijan Foreign Minister Mammadyarov urged the U.S. to lift Jackson-Vanik for the two GUAM countries to which it still applied -- Azerbaijan and Moldova. The GUAM representatives considered the possibility of sending a GUAM message of congratulations to Iraq on the formation of a government, but ultimately did not do so. At a May 22 dinner for GUAM meeting delegates, GUAM foreign ministers expressed concern about the precedent that Kosovo independence might set for "frozen conflicts" in Moldova and the Caucasus region. Participants approved the text of a U.S.-GUAM joint statement (text in paragraph 14). End summary.

¶2. (U) Following were the GUAM representatives at the meeting.

-- Ukrainian Foreign Minister Borys Tarasyuk
-- Azerbaijan Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov
-- Georgian Foreign Minister Gela Bezhushvili
-- Moldovan Deputy Foreign Minister Valeriu Ostalep

Azerbaijan Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov was also present and spoke.

Ukraine

¶3. (U) Starting the meeting, Tarasyuk said the next day's GUAM summit would be known as a summit of transformation, establishing GUAM as an international organization to be known as Organization for Democracy and Economic Development - GUAM. He had informed the U.S. delegation that GUAM had finalized 16 documents for the summit. On May 23, the GUAM leaders would sign the new GUAM charter, the Kiev declaration, a declaration on "frozen conflicts," and a summit communique. In addition to the presidents, three other groups were meeting to foster intensified cooperation and better relations among GUAM member-states. One group comprised the ministers of economy, transportation, and energy and the chiefs of custom services. A second meeting brought together heads of law enforcement agencies -- the ministers of interior and heads of the security and border services. Representatives of the business communities and chambers of commerce were meeting in the third group.

¶4. (SBU) Tarasyuk expressed appreciation for USG support for GUAM and for providing valuable experience as GUAM transformed into an international organization. He also thanked the U.S. delegation for continuing USG political support in international fora and for the technical and budget support provided to the Euro-Atlantic Advisory Team (EAAT) and for the establishment of the Virtual Law Enforcement Center (VLEC). As GUAM moved forward, Ukraine saw several priority tasks for GUAM and the U.S.-GUAM partnership. First, the GUAM secretariat, which was leanly staffed with no more than eight people, would be kept small but needed technical assistance to develop effective operational capabilities. In this regard, the Ukrainian government was preparing a secretariat office in downtown Kiev. Second, GUAM would appreciate USG assistance in intensifying its partnership with other organizations, particularly the European Union, with which interactions so far had been minimal. Third, Tarasyuk suggested that GUAM's parliamentary association would need to develop a relationship with the U.S. Congress.

Azerbaijan

¶5. (SBU) Mammadyarov observed that U.S.-GUAM relations had intensified, particularly after the 9/11 events, resulting in a deepening of cooperation at all levels. GUAM member-states understood and supported the importance of steps to reduce the threats of terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). During his tenure as Azerbaijani ambassador to the U.S., he had valued EUR/ACE official John Markey's support to GUAM. Observing that GUAM traditionally held a bilateral meeting with the U.S. on the margins of the

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UN General Assembly (UNGA) meeting in New York, Mammadyarov suggested that the joint statement incorporate the GUAM and U.S. intention to do so once more in September 2006. Evidence that GUAM and the U.S. were discussing substantive issues would add credibility and status to the new international organization. Tarasyuk immediately expressed his support for Mammadyarov's suggestion.

Georgia

¶6. (U) Bezhushvili said GUAM's new status as an organization would serve to make its cooperation within the U.S.-GUAM Framework Agreement more efficient. As a new organization, GUAM hoped to focus on ways to enhance member-states' energy security as well as seeking to cooperate with the EU on energy security issues. GUAM member-states could potentially work together to develop a joint energy project that could be brought to donor nations for financing. GUAM also had the possibility of demonstrating to neighboring countries how an organization based on a common vision and common principles could be effective in promoting the democratic processes underway in the four countries. Bezhushvili encouraged Tarasyuk to provide the U.S. delegation a more detailed briefing on GUAM's achievements to date.

Moldova

¶7. (U) Ostalep said GUAM had enjoyed a good relationship working with the EAAT on trafficking in persons (TIP) issues, which was a problem that particularly affected Moldova, and urged GUAM members to make TIP an organizational priority. GUAM would have access to a TIP analytical center through Moldova that the USG had helped to establish in Chisinau.

U.S.

¶8. (SBU) EUR DAS Kramer relayed the Secretary's

congratulations for GUAM's achievements. After introducing OVP DNSA Wood, Kramer agreed to include a reference to the proposed U.S.-GUAM meeting at UNGA in the joint statement (see last sentence of text in paragraph 14) and agreed with the Moldovan Deputy Minister on the importance of the TIP issue. He emphasized the importance of taking necessary legal steps and implementing effective accounting procedures to allow USG funding to be provided directly to the GUAM secretariat, since the SECI (Southeastern Europe Cooperation

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Initiative) center would soon no longer serve as a pass-through for funding of U.S.-GUAM Framework projects. He assured the GUAM representatives that the USG stood ready to explore other avenues of cooperation with GUAM while continuing to ensure the success of existing and ongoing projects. The USG welcomed the GUAM member-states' initiative in transforming and revitalizing GUAM, a sure sign that the organization's membership, not the U.S., was the driving force behind the organization.

Discussion: Jackson-Vanik, Belarus, Iraq, Kosovo

¶9. (C) Tarasyuk said GUAM representatives had agreed on a protocol on rules of origin, which was a significant step toward establishing a free-trade area among GUAM member-states. He then surprised his audience by suggesting that GUAM express its intention to provide support for Moldova and Azerbaijan's graduation from Jackson-Vanik. (Note: Georgia and Ukraine are no longer under Jackson-Vanik restrictions.) Mammadyarov expressed his appreciation for Tarasyuk's proposal and described the atmospherics behind Jackson-Vanik based on his experiences with the U.S. Congress while in Washington. Kramer voiced the strong support of the U.S. executive branch for the removal of Azerbaijan and Moldova from Jackson-Vanik, but noted that the issue depended on Congressional action.

¶10. (SBU) Kramer briefed the GUAM representatives on U.S. policy toward Belarus and thanked GUAM countries for their support of the policy.

¶11. (SBU) Bezhushvili noted each country had congratulated Iraq on the formation of a new government but that perhaps GUAM could send the same congratulations as an organization. Mammadyarov proposed that it be added to the communique rather than as a separate GUAM statement, but, when Azerbaijani DFM Azimov also objected to this approach, the GUAM representatives agreed to leave the issue to the GUAM national coordinators to decide.

¶12. (C) During a May 22 dinner hosted by FM Tarasyuk, GUAM
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foreign ministers discussed at length the potential of Russia using possible Kosovo independence as a precedent in other frozen conflicts against their (GUAM members-states') interests. Kramer and Wood pushed back, noting that the correct precedent was that the international community came together to find the right solution for each particular case.

Tarasyuk pronounced himself unconvinced and reiterated the Russians would use the precedent for their own purposes.

Atmospherics

¶13. (C) The meeting was characterized by an unusual degree of spontaneity and candor. In a sign of the rapport and camaraderie enjoyed by the foreign ministers of Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, Tarasyuk playfully challenged Kramer before the start of the session to guess from which university the three foreign ministers had all graduated. Disdainfully dismissing Moscow State University ("Moskovskiy Gosudarstvenny Universitet, MGU, well known in Soviet times as the training ground for the bureaucratic elite) as a

possible response, Tarasyuk said all three in fact were graduates of the Institute of International Relations and International Law of Kiev State University, as was Georgian President Saakashvili. (Note: Azerbaijan's Economic Development and Finance Ministers and Deputy Foreign Minister Khalafov also graduated from the same institute.) Perhaps because of his lower rank (and youth), Moldovan Deputy Foreign Minister Ostalep stuck closely to his prepared talking points. The meeting was conducted entirely in English, which, with Russian, is one of the two official working languages of GUAM.

U.S.-GUAM Joint Statement

¶14. (U) Text of the U.S.-GUAM joint statement, which was posted both on the GUAM and Embassy Kiev websites, appears below.

Begin text.

On May 22-23, 2006 in Kyiv, Ukraine, the GUAM Member-States and the United States met at the Eleventh Meeting of the Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of GUAM and the GUAM Summit to continue their dialogue and cooperation. The U.S. delegation was led by David J. Kramer, Deputy Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs.

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The United States supported the creation of the "Organization for Democracy and Economic Development - GUAM" with Secretariat in Kyiv and pledged to provide appropriate

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assistance. GUAM Members-States reiterated their commitment to cooperate on strengthening democracy, increasing security, and deepening political, economic, scientific, and cultural cooperation in the GUAM region. The United States congratulated Ukraine on its assumption to the GUAM chairmanship and reiterated its support for GUAM projects and for the Organization's goal of regional cooperation and development.

The Participants addressed the current state and prospects of the GUAM-U.S. dialogue, and noted with appreciation progress achieved in advancing the GUAM-U.S. Framework Program, which is the product of a four-year cooperative effort to generate concrete, multilateral projects to facilitate regional security and economic development. Since September 2005, the GUAM countries have completed their country-based inter-agency offices for the Virtual Center and Interstate Information Management System and continued the development of the regional task force structure intended for conducting law enforcement cooperation. The GUAM Member States have also created a Secretariat of the Steering Committee on Trade and Transportation Facilitation and intensified their cooperation for this project.

The GUAM Ministers expressed their gratitude to the Government of the United States for providing technical and advisory assistance to the organization. The Euro-Atlantic Advisory Team, established after 2005 Chisinau Summit of GUAM and sponsored by the United States, has proved to be efficient and instrumental in assisting implementation of the GUAM-U.S. Framework Program.

The Participants reaffirmed their willingness to develop consolidated efforts with a view to strengthening cooperation in fighting international terrorism, preventing proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and related technologies, combating organized crime, and confronting other global challenges. The joint exploration of ways to confront these common challenges to the GUAM Member-States and the United

States constitutes an important aspect of GUAM-U.S. cooperation.

The United States commended GUAM for promoting inter-parliamentary cooperation that is considered to become an effective instrument of parliamentary diplomacy at the regional and European levels. The GUAM States reiterated their interest in further deepening cooperation with the European Union, other organizations and states in fields of mutual interest, including diversification of energy supplies with particular focus on the Caspian region, providing security for energy infrastructure, and realization of the projects of the GUAM-U.S. Framework Program.

The United States reaffirmed its support for the territorial integrity of GUAM States, within their internationally recognized borders.

GUAM Member-States reaffirmed their willingness to proceed further with the dialogue within the format of the GUAM-European Union and GUAM-European Union-United States context.

The Participants agreed to continue mutually beneficial cooperation, and also to explore new areas of interaction.

They agreed to conduct their next meeting in New York during general debates of the UN General Assembly session of 2006.

End text.

¶15. (U) The delegation cleared this cable.

¶16. (U) Visit Embassy Kiev's classified website:
www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/kiev.
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